United Nations

A/CONF.192/2006/PC/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 January 2006

Original: English

Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
New York, 9-20 January 2006

Note verbale dated 6 January 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs

The Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Secretariat (Department for Disarmament Affairs), and has the honour to transmit the attached report on the efforts of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (see annex).

The Permanent Mission wishes that this report should be reflected as a document of the forthcoming meeting of the Preparatory Committee and of the next United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 6 January 2006 from the Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Department for Disarmament Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

Report on the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in the field of combating the spread of and trade in firearms

Submitted to the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs in connection with the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

A. Introduction

The Sultanate of Oman attaches extreme importance to the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme aimed at preventing illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects owing to the problems which the inordinate use of weapons or illicit trade in small arms and light weapons pose in the social and economic spheres as well as in the area of security. Such problems include the emergence of arms-, ammunition- and drug-smuggling gangs and acts of plundering and robbery on public roads and highways. Such excesses have resulted, for example, in the destruction of public and private property and the commission of other crimes such as murder or resistance to policemen in the performance of their national duty.

B. Efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman in the field of combating illicit trade in and unlawful use of weapons

Owing to the strong desire of the Sultanate of Oman to maintain public security and order, to protect persons and property, to ensure tranquillity and peace, to strive to establish security and cause development to flourish in the country, all the security forces have joined the citizens in their efforts to eliminate the phenomenon by means of the following actions:

1. Measures to control and regulate the use of small arms and light weapons at the local level

1. The Sultanate has passed legislation dealing with all weapons questions relating to licensing, possession, use, importing and trade, be it in respect of individuals and clubs or in respect of institutions, whether belonging to the public or private sector, namely: law 90/36 and amendments thereto and executive regulation No. 98/22.

The security forces have coordinated their efforts in order to find out what firearms of every nature and description citizens possess, issuing the appropriate permits for a limited number of types and confiscating the rest.

2. Oman is organizing a media campaign that points out the evils and dire consequences of the possession and use of firearms and explosives.

3. Local committees have been established to regulate the possession of legal weapons. In addition, community shooting ranges have been established at which shooting is practised as a sports activity. Moreover, the possibility is currently being studied of including weapons shooting among the sports activities engaged in by sporting clubs under the aegis of Omani Shooting Association, the Royal Oman Police and the Ministry of Sports Affairs in accordance with the required rules and princip. s for the practice of that type of activity.

4. Oman has designated a single authority to be in charge of regulating weapons-related matters such as importation, licensing, supervision and control, under the oversight of the Royal Oman Police.

5. The Inspector-General of Police and Customs has entrusted the Directorate General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations within the Royal Oman Police with the responsibility for monitoring compliance with the said laws, regulations and decrees governing such matters.

6. There has been created within the Directorate General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations a database for criminal analysis into which reports and criminal cases are entered, indicating the infraction of the laws and regulations; the nature of the violation; the personal particulars of the infringer; the sources, nature and manner of acquisition of the weapons (theft, purchase, smuggling, local manufacture); and other relevant information concerning arms smugglers or traffickers.

7. Oman compiles complete yearly statistics on all offences occurring in the Sultanate and on their perpetrators, as well as statistics by nationality and age group. Included are crimes involving the use of, or illicit trade in, weapons.

8. All weapons that are licensed (within extremely narrow limits) in Oman are subject to laboratory testing with the use of the latest technologies. All the data pertaining to them and to the persons licensed to use them are recorded before the weapons are turned over to them by the Directorate General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations or any of its provincial or regional divisions.

9. Oman has developed sophisticated means of searching for weapons and ammunition in airports and seaports and at land border-crossing points and has trained highly qualified staff skilled in the use of state-of-the-art operational and scientific technologies. It also makes use of police dogs in weapons-inspection operations.

10. Oman cooperates with the international community in combating terrorism and drugs and in the effort to curtail the phenomenon of illicit trade in weapons of every nature and description by means of controlled delivery or the apprehending of contraband shipments passing through ports or land border-crossing points.

II. International cooperation in the field of control of the spread of small arms and light weapons

In view of the fact that the issue of small arms and light weapons has now become a matter of great concern internationally, the Sultanate of Oman proposes the adoption of the following measures that might be taken to strengthen international cooperation to limit the phenomenon of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons:

1. Restricting weapons manufacture and trade to Governments and licensed traders;

2. Requiring factories that manufacture such weapons to mark the weapons so as to facilitate the process of tracing them;

3. Ensuring compliance on the part of manufacturing countries with the rules governing production and export and not exporting such weapons to any non-governmental or unofficial entity;

4. Placing restrictions on the export of weapons to importing countries and banning of exports to States involved in any armed conflict except where the weapons requested are for the purpose of self-defence or resistance to occupation;

5. Placing weapons warehouses under Government control, tightening the monitoring of such warehouses and ensuring the requisite protection and guarding so as to prevent the weapons from being subject to looting or theft;

6. Strengthening cooperation among States in the area of exchange of information on arms shipments and checking at airports and seaports and in border areas to make sure that such shipments are legal;

7. Improving the customs and security services and providing them with sophisticated equipment to assist them in detecting contraband weapon and ammunition shipments;

8. Enhancing intelligence cooperation among States to facilitate tracking shipments of weapons from the source to the party into whose hands they will eventually pass and ascertaining who the individuals and groups involved are;

9. Establishing legislation and management procedures at the State level to make it possible to exercise effective control over the possession of weapons by individuals and groups;

10. Helping poor countries to develop their societies and raise their standard of living, inasmuch as poverty and low living standards are reckoned among the principal causes of arms traffic, for which substitute sources of livelihood must be created;

11. Conducting consciousness-raising programmes to apprise citizens of poor countries of the danger of such weapons and their effect on security, stability and development in those countries;

12. Providing financial assistance for programmes for the collection and destruction of weapons in the possession of citizens;

13. Encouraging international and regional cooperation and promoting the role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in reducing this phenomenon.

C. Results achieved

Thanks to the sound vision of the wise leadership of the Sultanate of Oman and the joining of efforts in this area on the part of the authorities concerned, security and tranquillity have come to reign among citizens and residents throughout the Sultanate of Oman. Outlaws and those who allow themselves to be tempted to break the law have felt the power of the State and the might of its security and military organs, their capacity for combating crime in all its forms and

manifestations and their ability to protect people, money and property and achieve security and justice equally for all. All this has afforded broad scope for appreciable development and prosperity in every area of life in Oman.